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Security Council

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Letter dated 28 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to forward herewith a copy of the letter regarding the situation in the Guerguerat area that I addressed yesterday to the Secretary-General (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Omar **Hilale**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-06890 (E) 020517 030517

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Annex to the letter dated 28 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: French]

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to convey the following.

On 27 April 2017, the Permanent Representative of Namibia wrote to the President of the Security Council, transmitting a letter from the "polisario" concerning the Guerguerat area in the Moroccan Sahara (S/2017/367).

In its letter, the "polisario" speaks of a mere "redeployment" of so-called "elements of its forces" present in the Guerguerat area. This is, by no means, the withdrawal from the area by the "polisario" called for by the members of the Security Council in its meeting of 25 April 2017 and by you, both in your statement of 25 February 2017 and your report to the Security Council (S/2017/307).

The "polisario" expressly acknowledges that its military elements are present in the buffer strip near Guerguerat, in violation of article 3.1 of military agreement No. 1.

This admission contradicts the lies about the presence of "only civilian elements" in the area, which the "polisario" has fed to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and which are relayed in the Security Council's weekly briefing notes.

The "polisario" refers to the "redeployment" of armed elements only, which runs counter to your explicit request and to that of all members of the Security Council for a full withdrawal of all military, civilian and other elements from the area.

Even worse, and contrary to your call — echoed by the Security Council for — an unconditional withdrawal, the "polisario" dares to impose unacceptable conditions for the "redeployment" of elements of its armed forces in Guerguerat, namely a review of military agreement No. 1 and the permanent presence of MINURSO in the area.

The "polisario", which has violated military agreement No. 1 and the ceasefire, ignored your constant appeals for its withdrawal from Guerguerat and defied the Security Council and the international community, is in no position to dictate its conditions to the Council or to you.

The "polisario" is threatening to review its "decision" to "redeploy the elements of its armed forces" present in the area; they can thus be dispatched again to the area at any time, which means that the Security Council is being deceived and blackmailed.

The Kingdom of Morocco considers the letter sent by the "polisario" to be null and void. It in no way signifies a withdrawal or even an intention to carry out the immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal called for by both you and the members of the Security Council.

The Kingdom of Morocco, which withdrew fully from the Guerguerat area 24 hours after your statement of 25 February 2017, would like to express its unwavering support for the tireless efforts you have made over several months to ensure the "polisario's" withdrawal from the area.

The Kingdom of Morocco strongly hopes that neither MINURSO nor the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which are responsible for confirming the

full withdrawal of all "polisario" elements from Guerguerat and, consequently, compliance with military agreement No. 1, will fall for this charade. They should be careful not to be taken in by this attempted ruse intended to legitimize a so-called withdrawal and mislead the Security Council. The hidden agenda of the "polisario" is to avoid being named and shamed in the Security Council resolution that is to be adopted on 28 April 2017.

The Kingdom of Morocco shall not recognize any finding or verification by MINURSO of such "redeployment". In addition, it shall not be bound by any measure or initiative that may arise unlawfully from the content or spirit of the letter.

The Kingdom of Morocco emphasizes that the absence of a full, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all "polisario" elements, verified by MINURSO, and the failure to restore the status quo ante would jeopardize any chance of relaunching the political process which you, and Morocco, so fervently desire.

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its full confidence in your leadership. Morocco also reaffirms its commitment and determination to support your efforts and cooperate with you and your next Personal Envoy to create the appropriate environment and momentum for resuming the political process, with a view to achieving a negotiated political solution, in accordance with the parameters defined by the Security Council since 2007.

(*Signed*) Omar **Hilale**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative